

**Franklin Township
Open Space, Recreation and Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund
Advisory Committee
Minutes February 18th, 2014**



Melba Battin-P
Robert Mettler-P
Bill Connell-P
Jack Connolly-P
Bob Vornlocker-
Mark Healy-P
Randy Jones-P
Julia Presley-
Ted Chase-
Fran Varacalli (Consultant)

Robert LaCorte-P
John Moon-P
Alice Osipowitz-
Bob Puskas-EA
Arnold Schmidt-P
David Triggs -P
John Herrling-P
Chris Williams-P
Phil Kramer

Note: January meeting canceled due to weather.

1. Call to order by Secretary Connell in accordance with the Sunshine Law provision 7:04
2. Introductions/roll call
3. Reorganization of Committee:
Lacorte moved , Williams Seconded, a motion to Reappoint , Randy Jones as Committee Chair, and Bob Puskas as Vice Chair. Motion passes Unanimously
Lacorte moved, Schmidt seconded a motion to appoint Bill Connell as Secretary, motion passes Unanimously
4. Approval of the November 19, 2013 minutes Connolly moved /Herrling seconded motion to approve with changes. Motion Passes
5. Financial Report—Varacalli reported Catherine Moody has been appointed as the new chief Financial Officer. Tax Receipts for 2013 are \$4,431,00.
Current Balance 17,000,000 13,000,000 IN RESERVE
6. 1st opening of the meeting to the public
Williams Moved, Mettler seconded motion to open to public.
Seeing no one.
Herrling Moved, Williams seconded motion to close to public
7. New Business
 - a. Draft 2014 Budget –Varacalli opened discussion

-discussion ensued regarding 2013 spending. Even though they have been budgeted \$304,000 was not spent regarding historic houses

Startlight Meadows-Mark Healey .FYI, its not a negotiation, just a good will opportunity offered by land owner on the frontage of Bunker Hill golf course . Two permutations were presented, both including a hiking path easement to the Bunker Hill open space property. The committee preferred the smaller easement and the house plots more consistent with surrounding area.

b. 2014 NJ Audubon Walks

Renew contract: Mettler moved Battin seconded , motion to approve contract for 2014 walks. Motion passes

-Chris Williams offered to do July, August walks and Woodcock walk in March

c. 2014 March Woodcock walks March 7th and 14th

d. 2014 Trails Photo Contest –August 31 deadline submission date

e. Eco-Heritage Tourism Plan

-Lacorte, Varacalli , Tiffany reviewed an updated plan, they discussed

-Preplanned walks

-Natural Beauty ,Clifford Zink of Somerset County Parks

(suggested we create our own book)

f. Eagle Scout Projects

g. Recommendation from TAC regarding Southern Park Concept plans

Trails advisory –suggested, the red stone argalite for the trails

h. Open Space /Trails Events

Saturday, June 7th National Trails Day –Chris Williams 9-11 am
Griggstown.

Canal Road Walk and Roll on Canal Rd. 2014 dates (2 dates)

Griggstowns to Blackwells Mills

Spring Plan A) May 18th Rain date: June 7th

Fall Plan A) Sept 7th Rain date: Sept 14th

i. John Loos (former long time OSAC consultant), offered to donate tree in Son's name and plaque-no expense to the committee

l- Schmidt reported, There was One Million dollars for trails work under DEP program that has been on hold due to Hurricane Sandy.

Lacorte moved, Schmidt seconded (Triggs abstained) a motion to Support DEP Trails Program. Motion Passes

8. Old business

- a. Hutcheson Memorial Forest deer fence – update
Professor Handel in Africa. , Varacalli took tour with Justin,
They are waiting for permit from state for fence. They are considering
Our concerns in the plan regarding current deer population
- b. Historic Signs – update Lacorte moved, Williams seconded motion
To budget \$25,000 not to exceed \$27,000 update historic signs. Motion Passes
- c. Update on Middlebush Park Improvements and Trail:
Lights for football field have been installed.
- d. Native grasslands sub committee report
-removing invasive trees ...
-Williams concerned about grass lands being cut too much

Editorial note by Secretary: Not cutting enough, allows invasive species to take hold.
Cutting too much effects the health viability of the ecosystem. This is an ongoing discussion based
on the condition of the grasslands at the time. Striking a balance is the goal

9. Consent Agenda

- a. Open Space consultant's work-log

10. Announcements, reports from other Committee's

-- March 17 Seminar on honey bees in council chambers

--Land Rally March 22nd

--New Jersey Water supply authority update:

Several detentions basins will get trees and grass. This reflects a new discipline for
Retention basins; to improve them and work in a more natural way.

11. 2nd opening of the meeting to the public

Connolly moved Lacorte seconded motion to open to public. Motion Passes

Seeing no one,

Connolly moved, Lacorte seconded motion to close to public Motion Passes

12. The Committee may, at any time, enter into Executive Session to discuss matters
involving litigation, personnel or real estate matters

Metter Mettler moved Lacorte seconded, motion to go into executive session. Motion Passes

13. Triggs moved, Schmidt seconded motion to adjourn, Motion Passes 8:45pm.

Respectfully submitted
Bill Connell
Secretary